

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

DEPT PASS DEF AND OTHER ADDRESSEES AS APPROPRIATE

INCL DEP ASST SECY DEF BERGOLD IN LISBON

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR GR

SUBJECT: US-GREEK NEGOTIATIONS-MILITARY FACILITIES

REF: ATHENS 1232 AND ATHENS 1298

1. THE CONCLUDING SESSION TODAY OF THE INITIAL PHASE OF OUR TALKS WITH THE GREEK GOVT ABOUT BILATERAL MILITARY AGREEMENTS AND US FACILITIES IN GREECE DID NOTHING TO CHANGE OUR BASIC EVALUATION OF GREEK OBJECTIVES (REFTEL). THE GREEK SIDE REFERRED AGAIN TO OUR FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON (ATHENAI) AND THE GREEK NEGOTIATOR IF ANYTHING HARDENED THEIR POSITION WHEN HE SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD NOTED THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACHED TO THESE FACILITIES AND OUR CONTENTION THAT THEY SERVED GREEK DEFENSE NEEDS, NEVERTHELESS, THE GREEK GOVT WOULD "INSIST" THAT THE US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON BE ELIMINATED. OTHER POINTS MADE OR REEMPHASIZED BY THE GREEK SIDE WERE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR PREVIOUSLY OUTLINED POSITION. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE GREEKS WANT (A) TO REDUCE THE AMERICAN PROFILE, (B) TO UP-DATE, SYNTHESIZE AND TIGHTEN WRITTEN AGREEMENTS AND (C) TO MONITOR AND CONTROL MORE DIRECTLY US MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN GREECE.

2. AT AMB CALOGERAS' LUNCH FOR THE AMERICAN

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DELEGATION FOLLOWING THE FINAL SESSION, CALOGERAS TOOK

STEARNS ASIDE TO PROVIDE WHAT HE TERMED AN "INDISCREET" CLARIFICATION OF GREEK POSITION. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE CLARIFICATION WAS NOT PARTICULARLY INDISCREET, ALTHOUGH IT DID SUPPLY A HELPFUL BACKGROUND.

3. CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN CARAMANLIS FOR THE SECOND TIME FEB 13 (HIS FIRST MEETING WITH CARAMANLIS WAS ON SATURDAY, FEB 8) AND HAD BRIEFED THE PM ON THE PROGRESS OF THE DISCUSSIONS. CARAMANLIS HAD INSTRUCTED CALOGERAS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT HE WISHED, ESSENTIALLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS, TO DEMONSTRATE PROGRESS IN REDUCING THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN GREECE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AT THE SAME TIME, CARAMANLIS RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE TO GREECE OF EFFECTIVE SIXTH FLEET OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND DID NOT REPEAT NOT WANT TO INTERFERE WITH THESE ANY MORE THAN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. STEARNS ASKED WHETHER THE PM HAD IN MIND TANGIBLE PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE SECOND ROUND OF TALKS WERE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN MID MARCH. CALOGERAS REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT REPEAT NOT CERTAIN BUT THAT SOME INDICATION OF TANGIBLE PROGRESS BEFORE THAT TIME WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE WELCOME TO THE PM. STEARNS SAID THAT HE WOULD REPORT THIS TO WASHINGTON BUT THAT THE GREEK GOVT SHOULD REALIZE THAT CURTAILING OR RELOCATING ANY REPEAT ANY OF OUR ACTIVITIES POSED REAL PRACTICAL PROBLEMS. THIS WAS NOTABLY TRUE OF THE HELLENIKON FACILITY ALTHOUGH AS STEARNS HAD INDICATED IN THE FEB 12 PLENARY MEETING, THERE WERE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS RELATED ALSO TO ELEFSIS AND HOMEPORTING.

4. CALOGERAS SAID THAT THE US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON WERE A REAL POLITICAL LIABILITY FOR CARAMANLIS. "COULD THEY NOT BE TRANSFERRED TO SOME LESS ACCESSIBLE LOCATION, SUCH AS NEA MAKRI?" HE ASKED. STEARNS REPLIED THAT RELOCATION WOULD COST LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY AND IT WAS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN THAT CONGRESS WOULD BE WILLING TO FURNISH THE NECESSARY SUMS.

5. CALOGERAS SAID THAT US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON WERE A BURR UNDER THE SADDLE OF THE GREEK MILITARY. GREEK
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OFFICERS HAD INFORMED HIM THAT WE HAD USED HELLENIKON TO SERVICE AIRCRAFT BEING DELIVERED TO TURKEY. THIS WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO THE GREEK GOVT AND THE FACT THAT A RECENT INCIDENT OF THIS KIND HAD OCCURRED INTENSIFIED THE INTEREST OF THE GREEK GOVT IN ELIMINATING US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON. STEARNS RESPONDED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF ONE INCIDENT IN WHICH F-4'S BEING DELIVERED TO TURKEY WERE REFUELED IN THE GREEK

FIR BY A KC-135 WHICH THEN LANDED AT HELLENIKON WITH PASSENGERS
BUT THAT AS SOON AS THIS HAD BEEN
BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION WE HAD TAKEN STEPS TO PREVENT
ITS RECURRENCE. (WE ARE SENDING A SEPARATE
MESSAGE ON THIS SUBJECT.)

6. STEARNS REPEATED THAT HELLENIKON SHELTERED A VARIETY
OF IMPORTANT SERVICES MOST OF WHICH PROVIDED DIRECT OR
INDIRECT BENEFITS TO THE GREEK DEFENSE EFFORT. WHILE
RELOCATION WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, INTEGRATION OF
US FACILITIES INTO THE ADJACENT HELLENIKON AIR BASE
SHOULD BE POSSIBLE AND WOULD DO MUCH TO REDUCE THE
GREEK GOVTS POLITICAL PROBLEM. HE ASKED
CALOGERAS TO LOOK CAREFULLY AT THIS LINE OF APPROACH TO
SEE WHETHER SOME COMPROMISE COULD BE REACHED WHICH WOULD
PRESERVE THE VALUABLE FACILITIES HELLENIKON.

7. CALOGERAS SAID US NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SPANISH
INTERESTED THE GREEK GOVT AND MIGHT PROVIDE A
MODEL FOR NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN GREECE AND
THE US. HE ASKED WHETHER WE COULD SUPPLY THE TEXTS OF
US-SPANISH BASE AGREEMENTS AND ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
ON THE OPERATION OF OUR BASES IN SPAIN WHICH WOULD
BE RELEVANT TO GREEK-US NEGOTIATIONS. STEARNS SAID
THAT WE COULD PROBABLY NOT REPEAT NOT SUPPLY THE GREEKS
WITH THE ACTUAL TEXTS OF OUR AGREEMENTS WITH THE SPANISH,
SINCE SOME OF THESE MIGHT WELL BE CLASSIFIED, BUT THAT
WE COULD FURNISH INFORMATION ON OPERATING RELATIONSHIPS
NOT ONLY WITH SPAIN BUT ELSEWHERE. HE OBSERVED THAT
SPAIN COULD NOT IN ANY CASE BE AN EXACT MODEL FOR THE
GREEKS SINCE SPAIN WASNOT A MEMBER OF NATO. CALOGERAS
ACCEPTED THE DISTINCTION BUT SAID THAT THE GREEK SIDE
WOULD BE INTERESTEDIN ARRANGEMENTS REACHED

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IN OTHER COUNTRIES INCLUDING SPAIN FOR THE OPERATION
OF US MILITARY FACILITIES.

8. CALOGERAS AND STEARNS AGREED THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN
IN INFORMAL CONTACT WHILE THE FORMAL TALKS WERE RECESSED
SO THAT BOTH WASHINGTON AND ATHENS COULD KEEP ABREAST OF
DEVELOPMENTS AS THE TWO GOVERNMENTS FORMULATED THEIR
CONSIDERED REACTIONS TO THE FIRST ROUND OF TALKS.
KUBISCH

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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